AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously presented)   A method of classifying packets in a communications network comprising acts of:

(a) receiving packets in a network device;

(b) determining data packets present in received packets and identifying which packets are frequent flyer packets by:

(i) providing a cache in which predefined characteristics of packets and actions associated with selected ones of the predefined characteristics are stored;

(ii) for each data packet so determined, correlating selected characteristics of said each data packet with the predefined characteristics in said cache;

(iii) for each data packet with selected characteristics matching one of the predefined characteristics imposing on said each data packet the action associated with said one of the predefined characteristics, wherein the packets include TCP/IP packets, and wherein the determining act further includes the acts of:

(c) examining control bits in the TCP header;

(i) if selected ones of said control bits are set to a first state, examining a length field in the IP header to determine its value;

(ii) multiplying a value in the data offset field in the TCP header by 4; and

(iii) subtracting the result of the multiplication from the value in the length field; and

(d) updating contents of the cache at times that correspond to an expected burst interval of packets identified as frequency flyer packets.

32-33. (Cancelled)

34.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 31 wherein the first state includes logical "0".

35.   (Previously presented)   The method of claim 31 wherein the selected ones of said control bits include SYN, FIN and RST.